

Compiled by Mark Bryant

Global Crisis Fuels Child Sex Trade

“The recent economic downturn is set to drive more vulnerable children and young people to be exploited by the global sex trade,” says Carmen Madrinan, executive director of ECPAT International. Increasing poverty and less funding for social services are two of the factors that heighten children’s vulnerability.—*Global Post*, 28 October 2009

A Victory for Rickshaw Pullers

A Delhi high court overturned a limit on the number of rickshaw drivers set by local authorities, who had maintained that rickshaw pulling was a degrading activity. The court advised authorities to instead target private cars, largely owned by the city’s booming middle class, and to consider introducing a congestion fee.—*The Guardian*, 11 February 2010

Public Sector Can’t Solve Global Poverty

By the World Bank’s definition of poverty, there are more poor people in the world today than a quarter century ago. Yet, the strategy for reducing poverty across practically every developing nation has remained essentially the same for the past several decades. “Handouts will not solve poverty; neither will it be solved by grand government projects, or by piecemeal interventions of NGOs. Instead, poverty will be solved with vibrant economic activity driven mostly by the private sector,” writes Abraham George, founder of The George Foundation, and author of *India Untouched: The Forgotten Face of Rural Poverty*.—*Why the fight against poverty is failing: A contrarian view by India Knowledge@Wharton, Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania*, 31 October 2006

Profits and Preservation

During a 2002 trip, Laurence Brahm realized the need for a development strategy in the Himalayas that enables ethnic groups to start enterprises while holding onto their religious and cultural traditions. He dubbed his experiment in local development the “Himalayan Consensus.”

“The pitfalls that I have seen come from a failure to see how local conditions will impact the long-term success or failure of an economic development plan,” says Brahm, an international mediator, lawyer, author, and activist.—*GlobalAtlanta*, 16 February 2010

Battling Gender Bigotry

India and Malaysia have annulled their laws allowing marital rape...[The Republic of] Korea has changed its law designating the man as head of the family. And Pakistan has removed the evidentiary requirement of four male Muslim witnesses to prove rape. “However, despite commitments to repeal all gender-based discriminatory laws, many remain in force, which deny women formal recourse to justice and prevent them from fully participating in society,” says Taina Bien-Aime, executive director of Equality Now.—*Inter Press Service*, 24 February 2010

Childhood Poverty Hits Hard

Early childhood is a “crucial time for establishing the brain architecture that shapes children’s future cognitive, social, and emotional well-being,” says a study in the United States. “Children growing up in a disadvantaged setting show disproportionate levels of reactivity to stress.” Yet researchers found it was possible to improve the future of poor children, by giving the families of under-5s more income.—*Agence France-Presse*, 21 February 2010

The Myth of Microloans

“By every standard, poverty has worsened in Bangladesh over the past 2 decades as microloans became the all-pervasive ‘solution’ to poverty,” argues the *Workers World*. Aneel Karnani, professor at the University of Michigan’s Ross School of Business, argues that microcredit does not empower women or increase the number of people with jobs or the gross domestic product of a country.—*Workers World*, 24 February 2010